

**Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Electronic Regulatory Filing
Presentation for Utilities
July 22, 2003**

Introduction

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is undertaking the Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) project to reduce the time necessary to make decisions on proposed actions, to increase public access to information on PSC cases, and to provide ease and convenience for utilities, consultants, applicants, and other participants in the agency's formal cases. The system will allow the PSC to receive, circulate, process and publish documents electronically.

Definitions

Electronic: the use of modern information technologies.

Document: a set of information pertaining to a topic, structured for human comprehension, represented by a variety of symbols, stored and handled as a unit.

Management: creation, storage, organization, transmission, retrieval, manipulation, update, and eventual disposition of documents to fulfill an organizational purpose.

History

In the fall of 2000, the PSC brought together a staff project team to study the Formal Case process, with an eye towards understanding the requirements for an ERF system. In April, 2001, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed, but the RFP was never released to vendors, and the project was placed on hold because of state budget shortfalls.

In the summer of 2002, the project was resurrected, with the expectation that the PSC's Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff could develop a system in-house that could meet the majority of the identified system requirements. The prototypes that are now being demonstrated are a result of that development effort.

With limited staff and limited budget, the philosophy behind this project is to develop a simple, easy-to-use, yet reliable system that can meet the needs of both the PSC and its customers. The project has been partitioned into phases, with the first phase providing maximal benefit to PSC customers. Later phases will primarily address internal PSC staff needs.

Environment

The PSC is a moderate-sized State of Wisconsin agency consisting of approximately 175 employees. All employees are expected to be computer-literate and all have computer systems on their desktops.

The Formal Case process is at the heart of the agency's business. Over the last five years, the PSC has averaged over 750 cases per year. One count of "final" documents that get registered in the agency's Case Management System indicates an average of nearly 7,000 documents per year in support of these cases.

Benefits of Electronic Regulatory Filing

- *Service Improvement* - The speed with which the PSC can act on cases will improve. Because documents will be filed and processed electronically, there will be less time and money spent on mailing, copying and circulating the documents involved in a case.
- *Customer Convenience* - Not only will utilities and consultants have an increased amount of time to prepare PSC filings, but soon after those materials are filed, the public and interested parties will be able to review the documents on the PSC's website.
- *Improved access to files* - An ERF system will categorize and index documents in a number of ways, allowing users to easily search for the specific document they need. Searches can be performed on key fields/words, but also a full-text search can be done when all documents dealing with a particular subject are required.
- *Improved Public Information Access* – The ERF system will allow most documents in the system to be almost immediately posted on the PSC's website for access by the public. The web interface will allow the public to search by case name or number, subject and numerous other factors and will allow them to view and print almost all documents associated with a particular case. The goal will be to make this information automatically available within hours of its receipt at the PSC.

Objectives

Provide a secure document repository that preserves the integrity of the stored documents:

- The document repository must be able to store original, official documents and restrict them from being modified.
- If confidential documents are to be submitted over the Internet, there must be methods to encrypt such documents during this process.

- The system must provide a means for segregating confidential documents from those that are not confidential.
- The system must secure confidential documents, preventing access by external users.
- The system must provide means for restricting access to confidential documents to selected internal users, particularly excluding “guest” accounts.

Increase efficiency of document handling by PSC staff:

- Get the right documents to the right people at the right time.
- Distribute documents electronically so that they get to the intended audience quicker than paper distribution.
- Provide the capability to “push” a document to an intended recipient, so that the user doesn’t have to go looking for it.
- Reduce paper handling by the PSC.
- By increasing the efficiency of document handling, provide a generalized increase in resource efficiency.
- Move information in and out of the PSC faster than with paper documents.
- Allow PSC customers to file multiple documents electronically using a fast, secure, easy-to-use interface.

Improve external accessibility of documents:

- Provide electronic/Internet access to documents, so that citizens can bring up documents on demand.
- The system should make all non-confidential, case-related documents accessible to the public automatically, after publishing in the public repository by the PSC’s Records Management staff.
- The system should serve external customers quicker than occurs with paper document handling.
- The system should reduce staff time spent complying with external information requests.

Comply with the Governor’s Executive Order:

- Provide a system that better serves the citizens of the State of Wisconsin.
- Provide electronic/Internet access to documents, so that citizens can bring up documents on demand.
- Provide quicker turnaround on document requests than exists with the current paper document system.

Implement a system that is easy to use:

- The system should be easily searchable.
- The system should be user-friendly both for internal and external users.
- The system must accommodate a variety of document formats.

Scope

The scope of this project is limited to the receipt of, handling, storage and access to documents involved in the Formal Case lifecycle, from document creation through eventual archival. Initiated by an Application from a utility, a Formal Case involves such components as the issuance of a Notice, presentation of Testimony and Exhibits, Hearings, the filing of Briefs and Reply Briefs, Orders, and Appeals. It is expected that all documents which comprise this process can be filed and managed electronically. Those documents which are to be made public can be automatically made available to the public on the PSC Internet web site, and security measures will be available to secure those documents that are to remain confidential. The scope applies both to documents that are created internally as well as to documents that are filed by those outside the PSC.

Processes

The following describes some of the processes a PSC customer would use in accessing the system.

- Customer gets a user account.

There will be two types of customer accounts: an individual account or a corporate account.

For an individual account, the customer will access a login screen from the PSC website. If the customer does not already have an account, he or she will be directed to a screen to establish a new account. Here the customer specifies information to identify him/her, such as name, address and e-mail address (personal profile).

Corporate accounts have been established so that a utility or law firm can establish individual accounts identified as being authorized to file documents on behalf of that organization. The first step in setting up corporate accounts will be for the firm to download and fill out the form on the PSC's web site in the ERF system. The organization should then mail or fax the form to the PSC's Records Management Unit (RMU). A corporate administrator account will then be set up for the firm. The corporate administrator will have the ability to create and manage accounts for that firm. When a new account is needed, the corporate administrator will log on to the system and specify a new account name for the person needing the account. The first time that person uses the account, he or she will be prompted to specify a new password and will have the option to update the personal profile.

This account will be used both for filing of documents as well as for establishing subscriptions to documents. This applies to both individual accounts and corporate accounts.

- Customer files a document

There are four options for filing documents:

- Application (public)

In filing an Application, the customer must specify how many documents are included, identify each document type and provide a brief description of each, and attach each document to the upload. The main difference between an Application and a case-related document is that there is no case number yet assigned to specify, therefore the customer must also specify the utility and a description of the application.

- Case-related document

The customer must specify a valid case number, how many documents are included, identify each document type, provide a brief description of each, and attach each document to the upload.

- Confidential application

Customer must complete a confidentiality request for each document filed, specify the document type, provide a brief description of each, and attach each document to the upload.

- Confidential, case-related document

The customer must specify a valid case number, complete a confidentiality request for each document filed, specify the document type, provide a brief description of each, and attach each document to the upload.

- Records Management staff accepts/rejects a filing

RMU will review each filing, verifying that it is appropriate, that the description is adequate, and that the case number is correct. When a document is accepted (or rejected), an e-mail will be automatically generated to the filer notifying them of the action.

The filer will also have access to an application that identifies the status of the documents that they have filed.

- Customer accesses documents

The customer will have a variety of means to access documents electronically. If the customer comes in via the Case Management portion of the website, and is viewing information about a specific case, the documents associated with that case will be available from that application. From the ERF portion of the website, there will be search capabilities where the customer can search for the document by a variety of search options (case number, document type, full-text search, etc.). Finally, customers will also have the option to subscribe to documents: by entering and saving a variety of search criteria, the system will generate e-mails with links to documents that have been added to the system that match the customer's search terms.

Features of the ERF System – Phase I

- Account creation – Individual users may create an account by specifying their name, email address, logon id and password. Corporate accounts can only be created by the PSC's Records Management Unit (RMU). Entities must complete a corporate electronic filing account request in order to establish an account.
- Authentication/Identification of users – Users must enter a valid logon id and password before they can use the ERF upload system.
- Change user profile and password – Once a user has logged into the ERF system, the customer can update their personal profile or change their password.
- Password reminder – Users will be able to request their password be e-mailed to them by specifying their logon ID and email address. If a match is found in the user profile, the system will automatically generate an email and attach the user's password.
- Uploading documents (SSL) – All documents are uploaded to the PSC's web site using Secure Sockets Layer technology. This encryption routine is accepted by all industries as a secure method of transmitting data. Users can upload up to 25 documents or 20 MB of data at one time.
- Subscribe/Search – Users may request notification of all new documents based on the following criteria: utility, case number, document type, and industry type. When a new document is accepted, the system will generate an email with the document title and a link to the public document on the PSC's web site.
- Check document status – Users may view a listing of all pending, accepted and rejected documents which they have filed. Corporate accounts may view the status of all document filed on their behalf.
- Quick Search – Users may view documents filed within the last 14 days by case number, utility name, industry type and document type.

- Detailed Search – Users may search the document repository by specifying one or more of the following criteria: utility involved, case number, document type, industry type, date range and keyword or phrase. If a keyword or phrase is used, the document title and full text will be searched for the word or phrase.

Future Project Schedule

- Presentations to PSC management, PSC staff and outside customers – June-July 2003
- Install system and train key personnel for pilot project(s) – July-August 2003
- Conduct pilot(s) – September-December 2003
- Train all staff – September-December 2003
- Expanded implementation for some types of cases – January 1, 2004
- Implementation of ERF for all formal cases – January 1, 2005